

# CAUTIONS

Against the immoderate Use of

# SNUFF.

Founded on the known Qualities of the

# TOBACCO PLANT;

And the Effects it must produce when this  
Way taken into the Body :

AND

Enforced by Instances of Persons who have  
perished miserably of Diseases, occasioned,  
or rendered incurable by its Use.

By Dr. J. HILL.

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

CAUTION

THE

REASON

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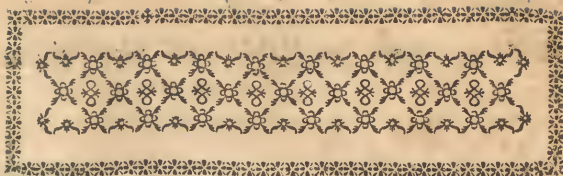
WISER

AND

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THAN



# C A U T I O N S

A G A I N S T

S N U F F.



T H E

I N T R O D U C T I O N.



SOME singular instances of mischief, which I have seen from the immoderate use of Snuff, have occasioned these cautions. I hope they may be useful to such, as from an excess in the same

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practice

practice, may be liable to like disorders.

As nothing is so strong as fact, I shall relate, in an exact manner, what accidents, from this cause, have come within my knowledge: and, as my single voice is too weak; and the observations I have had opportunities of making, are too limited for the importance and extent of the subject, I shall encrease them by the accounts of great and good authors: and strengthen them by their authority.

The method in which this subject may be rendered most obvious, and most affecting to the Reader, I apprehend will be this.

### I.

To shew what are the real qualities of the herb Tobacco, from which Snuff is made.

### II.

To examine what effects must naturally be expected from an herb of those qualities taken up the nostrils.

### III. To

## III.

To illustrate reason by experience;  
and shew what effects have followed it in  
many instances.

## C H A P. I.

Of the nature and qualities of the  
Herb.

**T**OBACCO is a narcotic with a peculiar acrimony.

'Tis such a body as art might prepare  
by mixing Opium with Euphorbium.

The herb itself is so nearly poisonous,  
that no physician gives it inwardly.

When by accident it has been swallowed ; or from external use on a wounded part\*, has made its way into the body, the first effort is that of extreme irritation ; and after this come on the worst effects of Opium, outrageous vomitings

See page 6.

and purgings ; and afterwards deep sleep, but not without convulsions.

We know how carefully we ought to guard against Opium, which has not this violent acrimony; how much more ought we then to fear a narcotic with such an addition.

A Recruit, who had been picked up from the tail of a country waggon, and was just taught to drink drams, and chew Tobacco, lay intoxicated, in such a posture, that his saliva, tinged strongly with the herb, ran for a long time down his throat. He was in the Savoy, one of general Anstruther's men, of whom I had the care.

He soon vomited, and fell into a purging ; discharging both ways enormously, and not without a tincture of blood. After an hour he fell into a deep sleep, but was waked by strong convulsions : he laughed immoderately ; and the next moment



ment cry'd : his sight was almost lost ; and he knew nothing of where he was ; but seemed as one mad.

After some time raving, he grew composed. and slept again : but he breathed difficultly ; his lips swelled, his face grew red and bloated, and his jaw hung down ; he was covered with cold sweats ; and often seemed dead, till a fresh straining to vomit brought him to himself again.

Nature was strong in him, and he recovered : but he complained a long time after of a sensation like that of fire in his stomach, and had a hiccough, which nothing could appease.

A woman at Denham, a servant of fir Roger Hill, was advised to thrust a piece of Pigtail Tobacco up her nostril for a giddiness of the head. She went to bed with it, and lay with her head off the pillow : soon after midnight, she was waked with intolerable sickness : she vomited

mitted often and violently ; and fell into dreadful hysteric complaints. She lay as dead a long time ; and, when a little recovered from this, became stupid and comatose ; her pulse was unequal, and her mind afterwards disturbed. She recovered by means of a profuse sweat, of a most offensive smell, like that of a corpse ; but she had a trembling of her limbs a long time afterwards.

A person had a contused wound on the thigh, attended with alarming symptoms : the surgeon, who had a high opinion of the virtues of Tobacco externally, added a powder of the leaves of that herb to the dressings. The patient was in a very little time seized with outrageous vomitings, which were very difficultly allayed. The surgeon, not apprehending the Tobacco to have been the cause, repeated it in the next dressings ; and the vomitings returned with the same alarming violence\*.

\* Ephem. Germ. 12. Obs. 108.



A person of one of the religious orders, ventured to use Tobacco for relieving people in the gout. He did not regularly give it, but rolled up a piece in muslin; and directed the patient to put it in his mouth, and hold his head down. This drew a great quantity of rheum from the mouth, and was not without its effect against the disorder: but it brought on vertigoes\*.

These instances may shew, that Tobacco is a powerful, but dangerous plant; and that those sovereigns had reason who prohibited the use of it in their dominions†.

'Tis not easy to say what drug we ought more reasonably to fear than an acrimonious narcotic. It should seem by the symptoms, that the worst of our vegetable poisons are nearly of that character.

\* Terr. Not. in Hernandez.

† The Turks and Russians.

## C H A P. II.

Of the effects which are naturally to be expected from taking the powder of such a plant up the nostrils.

**T**H E dry'd leaves of Tobacco, ground, rasped, beaten, or otherwise reduced to powder, make what we call Snuff.

To judge of the effects this powder may produce on being taken into the nostrils, we should acquaint ourselves with the structure of all the parts which it may reach. This ought to have been a consideration prior to the first use of the herb in that manner; and we may venture to affirm, that, if it had been so considered, this method of taking it would never have been introduced.

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There is no part of the human frame more delicately sensible than the nostrils ; they are covered, in a manner, with branches of nerves ; and these so thinly guarded from the air, that the brain itself may be said to lie almost naked there. This construction was necessary for the delicate sense of smelling ; and the provision made for it is, like all other particulars of the human composition, wonderful.

The nerves are easily irritated, and easily destroyed. Nature is always on her guard against the injury, and will use efforts in this case, violent, and even convulsive, to preserve herself ! but industrious man may overcome them all. Hence, when Snuff is taken, by a person unaccustomed to it, the irritation is extreme ; and then follows sneezing : this is the effort Nature uses to throw off the offending matter ; and it succeeds. The acrimonious powder is received no farther than into the open nostril : it is thence

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thrown out immediately by the shock ; and a plentiful discharge of a watery fluid following, washes away every remain of it. In this case therefore the Snuff acts by its acrimony only : there is not time for it to exert those other qualities which it possesses in so strong a degree.

This is the effect on a person wholly unused to Snuff. But custom gets the better of Nature's abhorrence to that powder. To work this effect in a due degree, the nerves of the nostrils must be in a perfect state ; but acrimonious substances which first irritate those tender organs, afterwards destroy them : for this reason, persons accustomed to Snuff, no longer sneeze on taking it. The powder, which was at first thrown off so violently, is permitted to lodge, and to exert all its force. The Nerves are thus corroded and destroyed, and the sense of smelling is impaired ; and, in the end, totally lost.

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But this is not all ; Nature, who answers many purposes, by one and the same way, intended this delicate sensation of the nostrils, not only for the agreeable and useful sense of smelling, but for the defence also and guard of that passage to the throat.

The nostrils open into the mouth, and are a second passage to the throat. The mouth we can shut at pleasure ; but these other inlets are always open ; and without some peculiar guard, many substances improper to be swallowed, would get this way down by accident ; beside this powder which we force in by art.

To guard against all this, Nature has given first a kind of external defence, in those short hairs which grow near the openings of the nostrils ; and to men a much greater, which custom with us takes away, that is the part of our beard



which grows on the upper lip. Offensive substances might be, in a great measure, kept out by these : but, if they find admittance, the next provision against our suffering by them, is that delicate sensibility in the nervous lining of the nostrils, which, on the first touch of any thing acrid, urges sneezing to throw it off.

These are provisions of Nature against the accidental swallowing of acrimonious things ; but we industriously subvert the very purposes of these in our method of taking Snuff. A few scattered hairs are no defence against what we apply with a broad thumb to the very opening of the nostril, and draw up with the force of all our breath : we thus compel the nostrils to receive this acrid and almost poisonous powder of Tobacco : and, by repeating the application, we destroy those nerves which would excite sneezing to discharge it.

Snuff is thus received and retained in the cavity of the nostrils : it tinctures  
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the fluid which the glands of the nose naturally discharge ; and some of this will make its unopposed way, with the saliva or proper liquor of the mouth, drawn into the stomach.

Let us pursue its course ; and, knowing its nature, from that, and from the structure of the parts, judge of the effects and consequence.

The saliva assists the juice of the stomach in the digestion of our food : it cannot be encreased without hurt ; nor altered without mischief. The acrimony of Snuff encreases the quantity of this, by stimulating the glands which discharge it ; and alters its very nature by the tincture which it gives, and which must be, from the quality of the Plant, narcotic and acrimonious.

Narcotics, we know, weaken the stomach, destroy the appetite, and prevent digestion ; but this is a narcotic, which,  
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the mixture of a peculiar acrimony, disturbs the natural operation of the stomach, even while by that other quality, it destroys its force.

A habit of taking Snuff, must therefore bring on disorders of the stomach ; and all the mischiefs that attend a bad digestion. But there is yet to be considered the œsophagus, the passage from the mouth to the stomach, thro' which it must go down : this is of a construction as delicate and as sensible of injuries even as the membrane of the nostrils ; and there is this farther dreadful consideration, that its injuries are beyond the reach of art : it is too far removed from the surface of the body to be capable of relief from the surgeon's hand ; and therefore hurts of it are often mortal.

The œsophagus has, like the stomach, a great number of nerves, very sensible of irritation ; but, beside these, its inner coat is villous, and by the vessels opening  
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there, it receives a great deal from the tincture of the Snuff even before that tincture reaches the stomach.

This is the real source of that satisfaction, which persons accustomed to Snuff, receive from it; but 'tis little understood, and best it should remain so. It does not cause them to sneeze, nor are they disappointed; for they do not expect, or desire it should. Here is indeed a short and immediate cause for its effective qualities: but there is also the most imminent danger. This delicate and downy substance of the lining of the œsophagus, while it receives the virtues of the saliva, strongly impregnated with Snuff, may also detain a portion of it on some unlucky occasion; and, from its irritation, when lodged upon a part so tender, and so largely supplied with blood vessels, there will naturally arise an inflammation which no hand can reach, with an extension of the injured part, whose progress nothing can stop, and whose end must be fatal.

We see therefore, in the eye of reason, what are to be expected, as the effects of forcing an acrimonious and narcotic powder up the nostrils for a length of time : but there are facts stronger than all reasoning, which will enforce the truth.

### C H A P. III.

Of disorders which have been brought on by the immoderate use of Snuff.

**T**HE first effect of Snuff will be on the nerves of the nostrils, where it is first received ; and these, according to their own tender nature, and the acrimony of the powder applied to them, will be destroyed. This effect is certain from a continued use of Snuff ; but it will come on sooner in some, and later in others, according to the peculiar structure of the part, which is in no two human bodies exactly alike.

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With the destruction of these nerves, will perish the sense of smelling, which depends on them; and, in some degree also, that peculiar sensation which is of a middle nature, as it were, between smell and taste, by which we distinguish the more delicate flavour of what we eat.

These senses may be lost without any immediate danger to life; but it is giving up what must be allowed at least very pleasing, to a very unworthy cause.

A country gentleman, three or four years since, received a present of some very good Snuff. He had taken common Snuff before, but not immoderately; the excellence of this occasioned his increasing the quantity. After about one year, I remember that, walking with him in the garden of J. Ware, Esq; at Westburn Green, a young lady in sport, took off a flower of the Stinking St. John's-wort, and desired him to observe how sweet it

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was:



was : she lost the jest, for he had lost his smelling : he put it to his nose, and answered, That it was sweet, very sweet indeed.

The sense of what we call the flavour of fruits, and of the more delicate foods, depends, like absolute taste, upon the nerves which are distributed over the surface of the tongue ; and this last is always impaired, and the former utterly lost by the immoderate use of Snuff.

This sense of the flavours of bodies is a more delicate kind of taste, and will be therefore first injured ; especially as the mixture of smelling, which plainly is concern'd, shews the nerves of the nostrils to have some share in it.

In order to our enjoying this sense in perfection, the nerves must be kept in an uninjured state ; and the mouth must have a due, and only a due degree of moisture. Infants have not that delicate sense of it  
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which men have, because their mouths are too moist; and the extremities of the nerves do not lie sufficiently exposed; in very old persons this sensation is less delicate, because the nerves are wasted. Tobacco will do much more than the injuries of both: it always tinctures the fluid of the mouth, when taken in this manner; and sometimes by accident, gets down in substance. In this last case it acts violently on those tender and almost naked nerves, from which we enjoy the flavour of the nicer foods, and by its acrimony would presently destroy them; but a great deal of water is drawn immediately into the mouth, by the effect of the same acrimony on the glands, and the nauseousness of its taste urges us to make violent efforts to spit it out.

Snuff therefore, which falls intire into the mouth, is soon washed off from the surface of the tongue, and discharged; but not without having first injured very

severely the nerves of that part on which it immediately fell.

On the other hand, the saliva, continually tinctured by the Snuff, and thus spread over the tongue, is suffered with less violence to Nature, and becomes lodged there at all times. This works slowly, but very certainly, the same effect which the Snuff in substance would have done if it could have lain there : that is, it destroys entirely the exterior branches of the nerves of the tongue by its acrimony : as a drop of oil of cloves, or of Tobacco, for they act alike in this respect, will destroy the nerve in an aching tooth.

Slow operations are generally sure. At first, when the habit of Snuff is but new, the quantity that is taken is not great ; and of that the far larger part is thrown off by sneezing, or is soon after blown out of the nose, in consequence of its irritation ; yet the liquors of the mouth  
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and nose are a little tinged from it. Its taste, tho' in itself disgusting, is thus but slight, the tongue bears it; if not without uneasiness, yet without any great offence; and being once accustomed, it gradually bears a little and a little more: by degrees also its own exquisite sensation begins to be pall'd; and in a length of time, is so far lost, that, altho' the taste of sweet and bitter, salt or sower, poignant or strong, and of all other coarser distinctions may remain, that delicate sensation, which may be called the taste of flavours, is lost altogether.

In Portugal, where the use of Snuff is too common, they are so much aware of this, that the persons employed in making up their wines, are never permitted to take any: and it is very lately, that I put the matter to a trial before many witnesses here. Covering the eyes of four persons one after another at the same table, who took a great deal of Snuff; we found they were not, in the least, able to distin-

distinguish the creams : not only they could not tell the raspberry from the pineapple ; but even not either of these from the coffee or chocolate : the coldness of the ice was all they perceived in either. They appeared as surprised as persons who had just discovered the loss of sight in one of their eyes, by accidentally shutting the other.

If this were all, a reasonable person would perhaps think it too much to give for the indulgence of Snuff : but assuredly it is not. Those who have so totally lost this delicate sensation of flavours, cannot but have impaired their taste with regard to other things : we do not perceive imperfections which come on slowly, but we should therefore be more upon our guard against them ; and it would be worth while for a man to consider in time, whether he shall chuse to get into a habit of taking Snuff at the certain price of two of the five senses ? Whether, for the sake of that frivolous indulgence, he shall

shall give up for ever the fragrance of all flowers, and the flavour and fine taste of fruits, foods, and wines?

But, if there should be any who think, when the account is fairly placed before them, that the indulgence of Snuff is worth this price, such are to be told, that these are the least of many sacrifices which they are to make to that practice: the physician and the surgeon must follow in the train of its attendants; and, beside giving up some of the most pleasing sensations of which the human frame is capable, they must expect its worst imperfections and diseases.

The acrimony of Snuff is able to produce, in those parts with which it immediately or accidentally comes in contact, swellings and excrescences, which, in some kinds, require the severest operations of the surgeon to extirpate them; and in others become fatal, because they lie beyond his reach: and the tincture which  
it



it gives to the juices of the mouth and throat, may pervert and impair the actions of the stomach, to such a degree as to bring on many diseases.

Let it not appear strange, that Snuff, which can effect all this mischief, is not found in every instance to do it. In many persons it is the cause of disorders, which they perhaps do not attribute to it, and of which their physician himself may seek some other cause : but if the number was small of those who suffer, in comparison of those who take Snuff, what wise person would yet engage in it ? if only five in an hundred ruined their constitutions by it, who shall be able to say, when he enters on the custom, whether he shall be one of the ninety-five who escape, or of the five that perish ?

But, in reality, the number of those who suffer, is much greater than is supposed ; nay, of those who suffer very heavily. Some are not sensible of the cause  
or



or nature of these disorders; others do not attribute them to the Snuff; and many continue to languish in silence, because knowing the source of their complaints, they can expect neither relief nor pity. Accidents will sometimes disclose things, very unexpectedly; and I have reason to say this with regard to the numbers who suffer mischiefs from Snuff, in one very obvious instance:

A German once proposed curing polypusses, or fleshy excrescences of the nostrils without cutting; and having succeeded in two or three instances, as soon as the cures were spoken of, it was astonishing to hear how many persons applied to him with the same complaint. Snuff was the cause almost universally. The man would have enriched himself; but he was not in effect, master of his own secret: he performed the cure by a root, a large quantity of which he had brought over with him; but when that was exhausted, he was at a

loss for a supply. He did not know the name of the plant to which it belonged ; and, tho' it appeared like that of some of our crowfoots, none that he could get here, answered in the effect.

About eight years since, there used to come to a coffee-house near the Exchange an elderly gentleman, who could not breathe but with his mouth open ; and from whose right nostril there hung the end of a polypus, or fleshy tumour, the remainder of which filled the cavity on that side. This prevented his breathing, thro' that nostril ; and he could make very little use of the other from a like cause. Nothing appeared externally on that side, but he was sensible of the same swelling within. It is not easy to conceive how much this unfortunate person suffered ; yet to himself, the greatest distress of all was, that he could no longer take Snuff, to which he had been accustomed.

Some time after I saw him so perfectly  
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at his ease, that he scarce appeared to be the same person : a surgeon of eminence had undertaken him after many had declined it ; and by attacking, from within his mouth, that which could not be got at by the way of the nostrils, he had made a perfect cure. The greatest advantage of all was that his long disuse of Snuff, with the sense of the mischief it had done him, prevented his returning to the custom.

A gentleman of somewhat more than the middle time of life, having been early accustomed to Snuff, and being very fond of the irritation it caused, thought himself unhappy, that, from the constant and long use of it, he felt less and less of that effect. He applied for stronger and more acrimonious kinds ; and at length met with a sort which gave him the highest satisfaction. Whether it were from a peculiar management of the Tobacco, or by means of some addition of other ingredients, is not known ; but the Snuff was so acrid, and that few beside himself could bear it.

The pleasure he found in it was but short-lived ; for after a little time, he perceived two swellings of a fleshy substance in one of his nostrils, and one in the other : they grew so quick, that, in eight or ten days, one of them hung a considerable way out of his nose, and the others began to be visible in the opening of the other nostril.

The larger swelling which occupied the right nostril alone, having grown out beyond the end of the nose forward, began to spread the other way, and forcing itself back through the aperture of the nostril into the mouth, and encreasing there very fast, reduced him to a miserable condition : he breathed and swallowed with great difficulty, and could scarce speak intelligibly.

The swellings were of a deep crimson, and very painful. His friends terrified him with the notion of a cancer ; but a surgeon  
of

of eminence being sent for, he was soon released from that fear; tho' not from the real disorder, without great pain. The swellings had arisen only from an inflammation raised by the acrimony of the Snuff: but there was no possibility of resolving them, or any other way of freeing him from them but by cutting them out. This was performed very successfully; and the blood that followed the instruments, prevented any farther inflammation. The operation was of immediate necessity to life; for that part of the larger polypus, which had extended itself into the mouth, encreased so fast, that the patient was in danger of suffocation.

Another case I have seen lately of a polypus, which had very bad consequences. Though I am unwilling to attribute the origin of this merely to Snuff, yet I am most certain that Snuff, which the patient continued to take as long as he was able for the pain, contributed greatly to  
encrease



encrease the complaint, and aggravate all the symptoms.

This unfortunate gentleman, after a long and immoderate use of Snuff, perceived that he breathed with difficulty through one of his nostrils: the complaint gradually encreased, 'till he perceived a swelling within, which was hard, but without pain. It grew slowly, 'till, in the end, it filled up that whole nostril, and swelled the nose so as to obstruct the breathing at the other: he found it necessary then to apply for assistance. The swelling was quite black: it adhered by a broad base, so that it was impossible to attempt the getting it away, either by the knife or ligature: He had hitherto felt no great pain; but, while the people about him were deliberating what to do, he perceived an unconquerable itching in the lower part of it. His principal surgeon, who was a very skilful one, cautioned him most earnestly to avoid scratching it; but in vain: he



he could not forbear; and the consequence was a discharge of a thin sharp humour, with dreadful pain, and all the frightful symptoms of an open cancer. He tried the famous Hemlock, but without success: it produced no good nor ill effect in him, and he was without hope, when I last saw him.

Another instance I remember to have seen of a most terrible ulcer in the nose, in a person who took a vast quantity of Snuff: but this, like the former, could not, I think, be attributed altogether to that custom; though it appears very evident, that in both, the Snuff violently encreased, and perhaps in both, brought on the terrible symptoms, at least, before their time.

The person was a lady of a sober and virtuous life, and there was no cause to suspect the accidents which sometimes bring on the worst ulcers in that part of the face. She had been long accustomed  
to

to Snuff, and took it in very great quantity. After the use of about a quarter of a pound of Snuff, which she perceived to be particularly acrid ; she felt a strange foreness in the upper part of her left nostril ; running, as she expressed it, toward the gristle of the nose ; she left off that particular parcel of Snuff ; but continued to take the usual kind as much as ever. No swelling was perceived ; but, after a little time came on a discharge of a very offensive matter ; not in great quantity, but of an intolerable smell, and the more so to her, as she was naturally a person of great delicacy. The discharge encreased, and it soon became necessary for her to leave off Snuff. A surgeon was employed, but to very little purpose : the symptoms continued : the ulcer encreased, and, from time to time, pieces of the bone came away.

Death, from another disease, put an end to that misery, which all the art of  
 physick

physick and surgery seemed very little able to relieve.

From this and a preceding case, in both which, as well as in some others that have fallen within my knowledge, the complaint first appeared after taking a kind of Snuff different from that to which the person was accustomed, tho' sold under the same name, there seems reason to suspect, that ingredients of a worse nature than Tobacco itself, are sometimes added, by bad persons, to the composition of Snuff. Those who cannot break themselves of the habit of taking it, ought therefore to be very careful to buy it only of the most upright and reputable dealers.

Beside these cases, which were attended with very bad consequences, I remember to have heard the late excellent surgeon Mr. Freke speak of one which came within his knowledge, and to which, if I remember right, he was called in for

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assistance, though too late : this was of a polypus of the left nostril, the root of which lay so deep, that it could not be got at, either by the knife or ligature ; and, which a young operator, who had read more than he had seen, had therefore pulled away with his forceps: the patient bled to death. No art whatever could reach the wounded vessel, or stop the bleeding.

Whether or not polypusses, which attend Snuff-takers, are absolutely caused by that custom : or whether the principles of the disorder were there before, and Snuff only irritated the parts, and hastened the mischief, I shall not pretend to determine : but even supposing the latter only to be the case, the damage is certainly more than the indulgence is worth : for who is able to say, that the Snuff is not the absolute cause, or that he has not the seeds of such a disorder which Snuff will bring into action.

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With respect to cancers of the nose, they are as dreadful and as fatal as any others. It is certain, that Snuff must be of all things in the world, the most dangerous, where there is a disposition toward them: for, in such cases what we are most of all to attempt, is to keep the parts quiet; and what we are most to fear is, to irritate them. This is the voice of reason, and the universal rule learned from experience: and nothing can be conceived so irritating in such a case as Snuff.

Many women have schirrous tumours in their breasts, which never become cancerous; and, in the same manner, there may be small and slight schirruses in the nostrils, which, in the common course of things, if left alone, would never come to mischief; but, as any violence offered to such a breast, will turn the painless swelling to a cancer, whose progress nothing but death can stop, so the irritation of



Snuff will bring the other schirrus into the same dreadful state. It is evident therefore that no man should venture upon Snuff, who is not sure that he is not so far liable to a cancer; and no man can be sure of that.

#### C H A P. IV.

Of disorders of the throat occasioned by Snuff.

**T**H E nostrils are the first part with which Snuff comes in contact; but through these the passage is open into the hinder part of the mouth, and the throat, or œsophagus; and there not only reason declares, but experience also shews it may do the most terrible mischief.

I remember, when I was very young, to have seen near the town of Peterborough, a poor old woman, whose granddaughter fed her with broth by means of a tobacco-pipe; by sucking at one end of which

which while the other was plunged into the mess, she could with great difficulty, and in the space of an hour or more, get down as much as was sufficient for a meal. The account she gave of it was, that her throat was swelled up within; and that the beginning of the disorder arose from swallowing some Snuff, which she had drawn over hastily up her nostrils.

An instance of a like kind there is recorded in the *Acta Eruditorum*: A person who took a great deal of Snuff, perceived, after some time, a disorder in his throat, which occasioned a difficulty of swallowing. No medicines reached the cause; and when he thrust an instrument down, it stuck at a certain place, and neither art nor violence could get it farther. He became unable to swallow solid foods, and in the end even liquids: by this means he gradually wasted, from a corpulent man to a mere skeleton, and at length died famished, being able to swallow

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low nothing. He was opened by the surgeons, and in his throat was found a polypus just like those formed in the nostrils, which filled up the whole passage of the æsophagus, and ran down from the place of its origin to the length of several inches. These are disorders, the causes of which are latent ; but perhaps they happen oftener than we imagine.

## C H A P. V.

Of disorders of the stomach occasioned by Snuff.

**F**ROM the æsophagus, the passage is open and immediate into the stomach : thither therefore the very powder itself may accidentally be conveyed. But that is not all ; the liquid of the mouth, which is so essentially necessary to digestion, goes continually down into the stomach, in those persons who take a great deal of Snuff, tinctured highly with its narcotic and acrimonious qualities.

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Now, though the stomach having been accustomed to this by degrees, and brought step as it were by step, to bear it, even when very strongly saturated, does not throw it off by a violent effort of vomiting, as is always the case, if a quantity of it falls by accident into a stomach not thus habituated to it; yet its effects will be perceived.

There is nothing that requires so delicate a state both of the parts and juices as digestion: and, in this case, the inner coat of the stomach is injured by the continual application of that acrimonious substance; and the juices which should operate in digestion, are terribly altered: from mild they are rendered acrid, and from dissolvents, they have acquired a degree of power of hardening what comes in their way. Experiments shew, that an infusion of Tobacco leaves in water has, in some degree, the quality of that infusion of oak bark, which is used by  
tanners

tanners to harden animal substance. Such an infusion made to a considerable strength, is of the colour of the red water, which lies on bogs, and which also has, in some degree, the qualities of tan. If flesh be put into any of these liquors, instead of softening, and by degrees dissolving, as it would do in common water, it grows tough and hard. The bodies of persons who have unfortunately perished in bogs, have, after length of time, been taken up, not at all, soft or corrupted, but entire and firmer by far than human flesh is in its natural condition. All know the power of tan upon leather, which is the hardening of it to a great degree; and an infusion of Tobacco will have a parallel effect.

Things will produce the natural effects of their proper qualities in the human body as well as out of it. The liquor of the nose and mouth are watery, and will take the sort of tincture from Tobacco that water does in a common infusion;  
and



and the natural and continual heat of the body gives it the greatest power that can be given an infusion of this kind: it is like that in a bed of tanners bark, by which I have been so happy to find that tinctures may be drawn from vegetable substances, of a degree of strength, not known before.

Such then is, in some degree, the juice of the mouth, when it goes into the stomach, tinctured by tobacco. It is not of a strength indeed to harden animal substances, to a degree like what has been mentioned; but according to its strength, it will operate in the same manner: and, as the business of digestion is to soften, and reduce our food to a kind of pulp, whatever tends, though but in a small degree, to harden what should be thus softened, acts directly against digestion; and will, according to its strength, impede that operation.

The first effect of indigestion is wind; for this is naturally produced by food

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which is not properly managed by the powers of the stomach; and the very worst, most obstinate, and incurable flatulencies arise from Snuff on this principle. More than half the diseases that torment and destroy mankind, have their origin from a bad digestion; therefore indulging in the custom of Snuff, is laying a voluntary foundation for the worst disorders; since it vitiates and depraves that juice, without which good digestion is impossible.

It has been observed, in commendation of Tobacco, that it reduces corpulence; and will render the fattest people lean. This is, in some degree true; but it is on the principle of spoiling the digestion, that it acts, in this case; and therefore to mention this effect, in praise of the herb, is highly erroneous: it never reduces corpulence, otherwise than a bad state of health, would reduce it, and leaves always worse complaints in the place.

I knew

I knew a gentleman of a good constitution, and fond of exercise, but upon whom fat grew, notwithstanding all his toils; he chewed tobacco, according to the directions of a rash person in whom he confided; and he certainly grew thin, and got rid of an almost lethargic drowsiness, which had hung upon him a considerable time: but the effect did not stop where he desired, his digestion was quite enfeebled; his flesh continued to waste; he became subject to terrible bilious vomitings; and died, in spite of all assistance, after having been reduced to a skeleton.

In those persons, who have stronger natural powers, the effect of Tobacco is either not so fatal, or at least not so soon but all the effects of indigestion follow.

A person applied to me in June last, supposing he had the gout in his stomach: what had led him to think this, was a continual burning there; and a

strange tendency to vomit frequently: he waked always with a taste of ashes in his mouth; and a little after came on an intolerable *heart-burn*; after this he grew sickish, and, unless his chocolate was brought immediately, vomited a thin, yellow, and acrid liquor. There seemed no reason to accuse the gout of this; nor did there appear any thing in this patient's constitution, that should occasion it. He had about four months before got into a habit of taking Snuff; and, on leaving it off at once, all these disagreeable symptoms vanished.

Less things than these will make a person often uncomfortable himself; and (what to a delicate mind, is perhaps yet more painful,) disagreeable to others.

A custom of yawning grows upon some people to a very unpleasant degree; and I have observed none are so extremely subject to this as those who take Snuff. The occasion of yawning is irritation, and  
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its seat is in the æsophagus ; whose inner coat being very sensible, forces this method of discharging the irritating substance ; just as the membranes of the nostrils bring on sneezing from the same cause.

If there be a thing more disrespectful to those among whom we live than yawning ; it is the coarse and shameful habit of belching. This, though it may arise from other causes, and therefore may affect those who do not take Snuff, yet is most frequent and most unconquerable in Snuff-takers ; and often arises evidently from that practice. Wind is bred in the stomach from indigestion, and is thrown out, in this way, by means of irritation : this powder of Tobacco is the cause of both. The liquor of the stomach tinctured with it, is incapable of good digestion, and therefore wind is produced ; and the consequence of the next pinch, as soon as the salvia, impregnated with it, can get into the stomach, is an irritation which throws  
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that wind up. This is indeed a relief: but it is such a one as few would chuse. A person of delicacy would rather suffer the uneasiness of the flatulency, than be relieved by these means. It is certain, that by leaving off the custom of Snuff, which is the cause, both the disagreeable complaint, and the coarse natural means of relief will be avoided.

These are the two lesser evils, which Snuff brings on in the stomach, the more full power, which it exerts, is in continual sickness and vomiting. It is but very lately, that an instance of this came within my knowledge. The patient, though a man naturally of a robust and corpulent habit was grown weak and emaciated; and was treading with hasty steps toward his grave. The physician, who had attended him, was sensible, that Snuff was the cause but he had not power enough to engage him to leave it off. When I had the honour to be consulted, he vomited always in a morning,

ing, and after eating; and, was fallen into such an habitual costiveness, that he almost forgot Nature had any such discharge as that which he had in a manner lost.

Approaching death had more eloquence than his doctor : he left off Snuff entirely; and, by taking manna dissolved in water, and mixed with oil of almonds, by a spoonful at a time, Nature resumed her accustomed course : the vomitings gradually ceased, and the stomach recovered so much strength, as to perform its usual operations ; if not as well entirely as before the injury, at least sufficiently for his time of life.

If to these immediate effects of Snuff upon the stomach, we add the natural consequences which attend an impaired digestion, we shall take into the account, in a manner, all chronic diseases ; and lay upon this idle custom, a charge so great, that it would appear as if we exceeded

ceeded the bounds of reason : but it is well known to physicians, that the first seeds of diseases in general are laid in the stomach, and are to be attributed to faults in the digestion. To the weakening this faculty, it is that Tobacco owes, as we have observed, its power of reducing corpulency; for it has no immediate effect to such purpose. Life wears out itself; and the very actions of the body waste it continually. It is from our daily food that daily waste is supplied; but, unless the stomach have its proper power, that food which should in part be assimilated to the nature of our bodies, and supply the wear, passes off without doing us such service. It is for this reason, people in hectic cases eat, yet waste; and, in all other instances, as well as this, it is in vain we swallow that food, which is capable of giving nourishment, unless we also have within ourselves, that power which should reduce it to a state of affording us its natural benefit.

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That power resides in the first instance in the stomach; and it is there capable of being by degrees impair'd, and at length utterly destroyed by Snuff. I have seen many waste away; and some perish absolutely, without any cause, that the most exact observation could discover except Snuff: and there appears great reason to believe that many perish by it; though few are thought to do so.

The miserable consequences of indulging in this custom are plain; and happily the remedy is as obvious: there needs no medicine to combat the effects of Snuff, nor is any of power to do it; the sole and certain cure is to leave off the custom: this will take effect at any time, and usually even in the worst cases; at least so far as I have seen: and, if the parts which have been corroded and destroyed, cannot be restored, yet the ravage will be prevented from extending farther; and, though some delicate sensations may be lost, life will remain secure.

One thing there is yet farther to be observed of Snuff, which would appear more terrible than all, but that happily it is not universal: this is the effect it takes upon the understanding. In some persons, it evidently dulls the apprehension, and by a long course, brings on a condition of absolute stupidity; a torpor of the faculties, and, as it were, a lethargy of the mind.

What is the immediate seat, or source of genius, and imagination, or how the soul is connected with the body, we are not permitted to know; therefore we cannot say why it is, that what are called the rational powers, are impaired greatly in some, and less in others, by the effect of Snuff: or why some, as is really the case, lose them totally, and sink into a state of absolute idiotism, from it; while others seem to stand altogether unhurt. But thus much we are able to affirm, that things which immediately affect the brain,  
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are capable of disturbing the operations of the mind; and, in some cases, of absolutely obstructing, or even irrecoverably destroying its faculties.

Curiosity might lead us to wish for a more perfect knowledge of this important matter; but it is enough for practical uses, that we know injuries of the brain may affect the understanding. We see how very near the brain is to the nostrils; and how very intimate a connection there is between them, by that amazing expansion of nervous filaments which lines those openings. We have seen also, how easily the nerves are irritated, and how absolutely they may be destroyed by Snuff: perhaps this last effect, which we might naturally most lament, is the happiest event that can be wished, by one who will continue the practice of taking it. The sooner these nerves are destroyed; the sooner the effect of this powder upon the brain is intercepted and prevented, and it may be, that by the loss

of smell, such persons save their understandings.

Our very imperfect knowledge of these things, prevents the tracing up the effect from its origin to its last action, as we can, in such as are the immediate objects of our senses : but we gather from all this, if not the certain, at least the probable cause, why of a number of persons, who take Snuff in the same degree, some are more, some less affected in their rational faculties ; and some not at all. Where the nerves of the nostrils are absolutely destroyed, that most direct course to the brain is obstructed, and no harm can happen, at least that way, to the understanding from Snuff ; where they resist its influence more in the nostrils, the effect may in proportion, be more sensible upon the brain. Indeed, if we consider how very easily those nerves are capable of irritation ; how readily they convey the effects of that irritation to the brain, how very susceptible that  
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part is of pungency, and how ill it generally endures it; and add to this, the extreme acrimony of Snuff, and its vast power to irritate, we shall be led to wonder, not that the brain, and consequently the human reason are sometimes affected by this practice; but that it does not happen much oftener.

Let none object, that Snuff has an effect contrary to what is here considered; that it assists, instead of impairing the imagination; and that those who write and speak, find great assistance from its immediate efficacy. Though we allow the truth of the remark, the argument is nothing in their favour; but may, perhaps, be greatly in reality against them.

The immediate effect of a pinch of Snuff, in quickening the imagination, is like that of a glass of spirituous liquor in giving chearfulness: it is a false fire in both; it is most perceived by those who are least accustomed to the things; and

and use wears it off. Those who are habituated to Snuff, feel no such effect from it: and for the rest, all that deserves consideration is, that we are sure from this, Snuff can affect the brain.

Happily the bad effects of it upon the understanding, are not found universally; but those more immediate powers, by which it corrodes and destroys the nerves, and the disorders it raises in the human frame, by mixing hurtfully and mischievously with the saliva, will always take place in those who continue the custom; tho' it may be in a greater degree in some, and less violent in others. The certainty of the one of these mischiefs, and the most reasonable dread of the other, we may hope will influence those who see themselves by their own fault, I had almost said their own folly, in the way of both.

I do not pretend to reason them out of the custom; all I have attempted

is to lead them to think : it is for this purpose I have laid before them the preceding instances of disorders that have been brought on by it. These would have been much more numerous, I doubt not, if I had been more conversant among the sick ; but they will appear sufficiently abundant to have fallen under the observation of one who does not practice physic. It has always appeared to me, that it ought to be the employment of one person to search the virtues of plants, and their general use ; and of others, to apply them in particular cases. An attention to the first of these has withdrawn me from the practice of a physician ; and these instances have been of some few persons, who were pleased to desire my advice, from a better opinion of it than I am afraid it deserved. A man, with much greater talents than my moderate share, would make but a very indifferent practising, physician, without the great assistance, of experience.

If



If the instances here recited, alarm and caution those, who, by the same custom, run themselves into like danger, the purpose of this publication is answered: they will see the importance of controuling their inclination in this point; and they may have the comfort to be assured, that those mischiefs, which have arisen, or may arise from this cause, tho' no medicine can relieve them, will, in a great degree, if not intirely, cease, on leaving off the practice which occasioned them.

While I recommend this, I know it is difficult: the force of custom is next to that of nature; but even nature, in some instances, may be conquered: and when the greater can be done, there is no impossibility in the less.

Every one has seen the ineffectual attempt of throwing away a Snuff-box, and begging afterwards of every body that has one.

one; this therefore is not the way. An absolute and determined resolution in great minds, will answer the purpose: and others should wean themselves, as nurses wean their children, by bittering the nipple. Something offensive mixed among the Snuff is the sole method; but this is not so easy as might be thought: the disagreeableness of the additional substance must be such as affects the taste: for the sense of smelling is, in all persons who have long taken Snuff, if not intirely destroyed, at least so far impaired, that the worst scents will have little effect. The coarser kind of aloes, with which nurses give infants disgust to the breast, seems better calculated for this purpose than any thing; and, as it may be mixed with the Snuff in a considerable quantity, without any ill effect, it seems the best calculated for the purpose. But even with this help, the cure must be more in the mind than in the medicine: for the bittering a man's own Snuff, will answer little purpose, unless he will determinately refrain from other people's.

